

Regional studies and political science. The theory of the dual unity of Silesia

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Abstract:

This paper concerns the status of regional studies in political science research. Analysing the theory of the dual unity of Silesia presented by the Polish political scientist Józef Kokot, the author attempts to formulate theoretical criteria that make a region an object of interest for political scientists and regional studies, a subdiscipline of political science.

Keywords:

regional studies, political science, scientific disciplines and subdisciplines, Silesian studies

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Introduction

Regional studies, which I understand as a store of scientific knowledge about a region/regions and a methodology of gathering this knowledge², are an object of research for many scientific disciplines, originally for geography, but at present mainly for disciplines in the fields of social sciences and humanities. In terms of subject matter (region/regions), regional studies are a common object for this set of disciplines and, in this sense, they are multidisciplinary and, depending on the epistemological perspective, the manner of research and the

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2 A discussion on the very term ‘regional studies’ has continued in the literature on the subject for a long time (Sagan, 2004, Chojnicki, 2009). The genesis of the controversy lies primarily in the various definitions of the concept of region. In spatial terms, we are dealing with regions of the world, continents, areas within countries or between countries. Moreover, cultural-ethnic, economic-social or political-administrative criteria are adopted for the demarcation of regions. Consequently, diversity in the perception of the term ‘regional studies’ is justified. Thus, regions also become the object of research in many disciplines conducted from the perspective of their own methodologies. This very short statement does not settle the discussion, nor is it a voice in it, but in this uncontroversial form, it fulfils its role in this paper.

applied methods, they can be treated as subdisciplines, for example, of sociology, history, cultural anthropology, linguistics, and many other sciences, but also – which is important here – they can be regarded as a subdiscipline of political science. Regional studies furthermore delineate the boundaries of a research field that is particularly amenable to interdisciplinary perspectives. Interdisciplinary approaches are adopted when the cognitive objective is broader than that set solely within a single discipline.

The objective of this paper is to identify a catalog of important epistemological indicators, which – in the author’s opinion – make a region as such an interesting research area for political scientists, and regional studies – conditionally – a subdiscipline of political science. This objective will be pursued based on an analysis of the theory of the dual unity of Silesia, whose author and propagator from the 1950s to the 1970s was the outstanding expert in Silesian and German studies, Professor Józef Kokot. It is worth noting that for three decades this theory was a part of the Polish political thought, referred to in particular as the Western thought or Silesian political thought (Kisielewicz and Rubisz, 2004). It is necessary to present some theoretical and methodological explanations clarifying the author’s understanding of such terms as scientific discipline and subdiscipline, area, object and subject of research, politicization and political, and finally – political theories and political thought.

Explaining the term ‘scientific discipline’ would be superfluous if it were not for its institutional specificity and formal meaning in Poland, but also because in these deliberations it is linked with the term ‘subdiscipline’. ‘Scientific discipline’ is a term defined in dictionaries and used in methodological literature as a separate part of scientific knowledge fulfilling four conditions: a separate object of cognition distinguished in reality, a relevant methodology, and ability to construct its own potentially useful theory, and a separate tradition of reflection on the object of cognition. Such a concise definition does not take into account and does not invalidate the continuously ongoing disputes concerning the status of particular disciplines, the boundaries between them, as well as the very sense of formalizing the division of science into disciplines. Such a discussion has been also present in political science since the beginning³ and has resulted in subsequent transformations in its original structure, and even – as in Poland – in formal changes of the name of the discipline⁴. An important aspect of these disputes is specializations within

3 Karl Mannheim was one of the first scholars to pose the question „Can politics be a science?” (Mannheim 1972, pp. 89-154). The institutional answer to this question was the establishment of the political science discipline at the International Political Science Association Congress in 1949. The discussions related to this fact cf. Boncourt 2009.

4 The circumstances of the changes of the discipline’s name cf. Rubisz 2013, p. 163.

the discipline called subdisciplines. The division into subdisciplines is determined, on the one hand, by the three segments constituting the political reality, and, on the other hand, by the aspects specific to the phenomenon of politics. The segments of politics and their respective subdisciplines include political thinking (political theory, political philosophy, political ideas); political action (public policies, political marketing, electoral behavior); political institutions (political systems, political parties, local government, public administration). Examples of aspects of politics and their respective subdisciplines include a cultural aspect (political culture, public opinion); economic aspect (political economy, economic policy); social aspect (sociology of politics, social policy); geographical aspect (political geography), regional aspect (regional politics, regional studies). The division into subdisciplines in political science, and not only, is not merely the result of the process of specialization in scientific research. It plays a more important role because through subdisciplines relations and permanent communication between particular disciplines are established, which results in interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research.

Each discipline of science has its distinct object of cognition. However, this distinctiveness is relative because both in the natural world and in the social world there are not isolated phenomena. In the political reality, the social, economic, and legal aspects play a significant role, and similarly, in the social, economic, or legal reality, the political aspect plays a significant role and is part of it. Consequently, there exist potential research areas that are conglomerates of different phenomena, and thus coexisting different objects of cognition and different disciplines. Intuitively, it is assumed that what I call areas here is determined by a geographical criterion, but research areas may be defined by features or sets of features other than space. These may be, for example, statehood, the type of culture, including political culture, membership in an international organization, or economic community. Examples of such areas and area research include Balkan studies, American studies, German studies, and many others, and finally, also regional studies referred to in the literature as area studies. Areas or objects present in them may be non-political by nature and as such, they do not fit into political science, so they are not a subject of study in this discipline. However, in certain conditions and contexts, non-political areas or objects become politicized and acquire political status. It is then justified those whole areas, or only their objects, arouse the interest of political scientists and become the object of research in this discipline. Analogous phenomena also concern other disciplines; a state constitution, an object political by nature, is also an object of research in legal sciences, similarly parliamentary elections in sociology.

Politicization is a term used in political science whenever it refers to the process whereby, as a result of intentional action or objectively, some objects or states that are inherently non-political become politically momentous and enter into a state of politicization. The mechanisms of politicization, and especially the essence of the political, are themselves the subject of research in the subdiscipline of political theory (Blok, 2021; Karwat, 2010; Minkner, 2015; Rubisz, 2015) and a separate problem in political science.

A necessary condition for the scientific nature of disciplines is the construction of theories or just generalizations that constitute the stock of theoretical knowledge within it (Karwat, Krauz-Mozer). In political science, a certain methodological problem is connected with it. Simultaneously, in the field of politics, we are dealing with political thought – ideologies, doctrines, or ideas – which have not only a visionary value but also a theoretical one, which often directly refers to theories present in science. There is more, because in political science theories, directly and indirectly, we encounter references to political thought. Thus, there arises a problem of the boundary between the scientific and the theoretical as well as the political and the non-scientific. In the model approach, political theory is (should be) falsifiable and neutral, while political thought is (can be) engaged, and answers the question about how things should be (Krauz-Mozer, 2007; Rubisz, 2013). The reality is sometimes far from what a model indicates. Many scholars, today and in the future, become creators of political thought and, similarly, the output of many political thinkers becomes part of the theoretical resource of political science. This problem and the previous ones have only been hinted at here, mentioned in an introductory form necessary to analyze the theory of the dual unity of Silesia, and then to formulate conclusions justifying the hypothesis.

The theory of the dual unity of Silesia

The theory was formulated over several years, as a result of a painstaking research process whose stages were presented by its author in subsequent publications, mainly books, but also academic papers and expert reports. The analysis was based on quantitative and qualitative methods and conducted from the perspective of several scientific disciplines such as economics, statistics, history, law, and sociology. The theory of the dual unity of Silesia, therefore, meets the methodological conditions of a scientific theory, and, with all reservations as to the formal criteria of the term, it is a political theory. This is clearly indicated by the evident object of research – international conditions and the bilateral dispute (in relations with Germany) over Poland's western border – and the title thesis: firstly, Silesia is unity as a region, and secondly, Silesia is an integral part of Poland.

Consequently, the subject locates the area of Silesia in politics, and regional studies – often referred to as Silesian studies – in political science. This theory met the conditions of a political idea already at the outset because it could be used as scientific substantiation in a political dispute, and secondly, it became a part of the Polish (Silesian) political thought, and as such it can be the object of research in Silesian regional studies and history of ideas within political science. The theory of the dual unity of Silesia comprises three groups of arguments corresponding to three periods in the history of the region: Silesia under Prussian (German) rule, before 1921, Silesia divided between Poland, Germany, and, to some extent, Czechoslovakia (1921-1939) and Silesia united within the borders of Poland, after 1945 (see Figure 1).

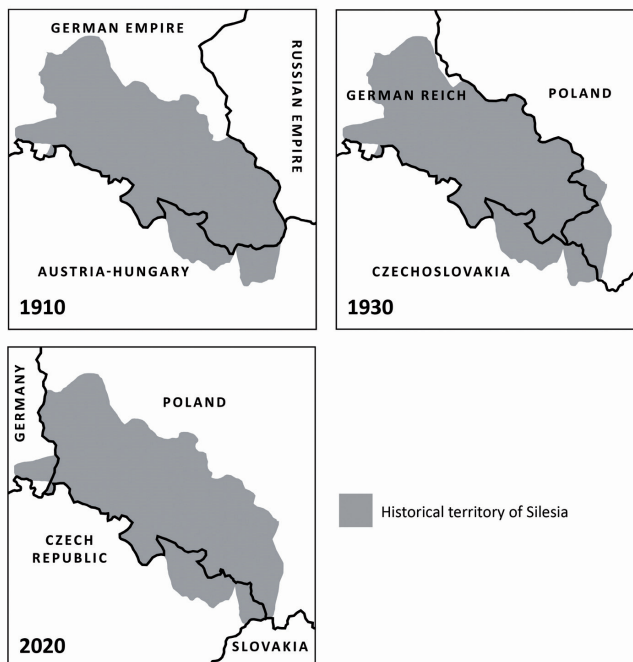


Figure 1: Border changes in Silesia

Source: Czepil & Opiola 2020

Silesia under Prussian and German rule

The historical diagnosis, which was the foundation of the theory of the dual unity of Silesia, was formulated by Józef Kokot primarily in his book *Polityka gospodarcza Prus i Niemiec na Śląsku 1740-1945* (Economic Policy of Prussia and Germany in Silesia 1740-1945; 1948) and in several papers. Although focusing mainly on the analysis of economic processes, he indicated that their course was dictated by the long-term political goals of the powers ruling Silesia. Using numerical data from the history of economics (tariffs, industrial development, transport routes, labor productivity) and an analysis of the social and national structure in Silesia, the author attempts to prove that this region played the role of a colony in the policy of Prussia, and subsequently Germany. The aim of this policy was neither equal integration with the rapidly developing western German regions, nor modern economic progress, but the exploitation of Silesia as a border province, and subsequently, Drang nach Osten. The undeniable economic development of Silesia at that time was considered by the author to be the effect of a spontaneous process resulting from its potential and natural resources, which, if properly exploited, could have contributed to an even greater flourishing of the region.

The above theses were developed and substantiated in the following books: *Jedność gospodarcza Śląska i Polski* (Economic unity of Silesia and Poland; 1961) and *Przemiany gospodarcze na Śląsku w latach 1945-1955* (Economic transformations in Silesia in the years 1945-1955; 1966). Once again, the author claimed that the interests of western German regions were, in fact, antagonistic to the interests of the Silesian economy (which also affected other areas located east of the Oder River), and because at the same time the natural markets for sales and supplies were in Poland, then – referring to the numbers – the principle of “dual economic unity” should be defended (Kokot, 1961, p. 8). To confirm this general assumption, Professor Kokot, in a calculated manner, followed the thinking and arguments of Emil von Lucadou, a German scientist from the Nazi period, presented in his work *Strukturwandel Schlesiens*, published - significantly - in 1943 (Kokot, 1961, pp. 12-56). Von Lucadou, wishing to demonstrate the injustice inflicted on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, stated that the border with Poland based on that treaty had ruined the economy of Silesia and the Oder Region because, as a result of the previously neglected integration with the western regions and natural links with the lands granted to Poland, it was not compatible with the economy of the remaining part of Germany in the interwar period. The German author supported his claims with many facts and statistical data. He concluded that Hitler, by occupying Poland, had accomplished the historical work of restoring the natural

economic ties between Silesia, the East Oder Regions, the whole of Pomerania and East Prussia, and the former Polish territories that had come under the rule of the Third Reich after Poland's defeat in September 1939. Agreeing with von Lucadou, Kokot used the German's reasoning to confirm his theory: "The border established by the Treaty of Versailles was indeed nonsense," he wrote and consequently, guided by the sense of justice and logic, the powers decided during the conference in Potsdam that the western border of Poland would run precisely along the Oder and Lusatian Neisse (Kokot, 1961, p. 9).

The economic history of Silesia until 1921 served as the author of the theory of the dual unity of Silesia to dispel the myths of German science and propaganda, presenting the alleged – as he claimed – economic development of this region as the achievement of German policy since 1740. Professor Kokot drew attention to the fact that despite its truly impressive socio-economic potential, in Silesia, under Prussian and later German rule, the positive development trends of the Middle Ages not only had failed to develop but had not even been maintained. This resulted in the so-called German East complex. This complex was the effect of a deliberate policy of cutting Silesia off the Polish markets with a customs border and reducing the region to the role of an exploited periphery of Prussia and later Germany. This policy was justified and reflected in statistical manipulation, which the Polish researcher called "the double-entry bookkeeping of German science". It attributed all positive factors of development in Silesia to Germanic elements, and all failures to international economic, technical, communication, and other conditions. For J. Kokot, the conclusions of his analysis are obvious: "This colonization became exclusively a tool of the Germanisation policy, it had no positive impact on the development of the economic life and industry in Silesia, but rather became a factor inhibiting the natural social and economic development of the Polish population of Silesia" (Kokot, 1948, p. 50).

J. Kokot also used statistics and historical demography to support the thesis that the Silesian industry had reached its relatively high level of development before the 19th century, while later it had developed regardless of its territorial affiliation to Prussia and Germany. Among the advantages of Silesia, he mentions the undeniable significance of natural resources at that time and the region's exceptionally favorable transport conditions. He also pointed out that its economic development had been part of the rapid technological and industrial progress of Europe in the 19th century. Thus, he argued, neither Prussia nor Germany had contributed to the industrialization of Silesia. He claimed that the quantitative as well as the qualitative significance of Prussian colonization under Frederick II, so often emphasized in German literature, was a product of propaganda, as

demographic data from the period when the Silesian potential was developed testified to a definite predominance of the Silesian population. He argued that Prussia had had above all a political interest in the conquest of Silesia, as it had wanted to weaken Saxony and Austria, while the economic goals of the state had been limited only to a radical fiscal policy, in which Silesia had been assigned the status of a colony.

In the light of Professor Kokot's research, Silesia, before and just after it was taken over by Frederick II, was the only Prussian province that genuinely participated in world trade. However, it quickly fell into decline. To support this claim, he juxtaposes the rate of mining and metallurgy development in Silesia and Westphalia: "Upper Silesia produced almost 4.5 times as much iron as Westphalia in 1844, and by the beginning of the 20th century Westphalia's output was 4.5 times that of Upper Silesia. Numerous governmental decisions were detrimental for Upper Silesia. The nationalization of railways and the neglect of waterways made it difficult to sell products and compete with the West. Protective duties, directed mainly against England, whose competition Upper Silesia did not need to fear, forced neighboring countries to take similar measures. Upper Silesia was thus locked between two customs borders" (Kokot, 1948, p. 55).

Further statistical, demographic, and economic analyses led Professor Kokot to another conclusion of political significance in his time: the economic interests of Silesia and the rest of Germany were, in fact, contradictory, and Silesia itself within Germany was an artificial entity not compatible with the German organism due to its economic, demographic, transport and industrial identity. He points out the fundamental role of the Oder River in the development of the Silesian economy and argues that it was of peripheral importance to Germany. Only 10% of all goods were transported along this route. In this situation, it became strategic for Silesia to merge with an area where it could sell its industrial goods and, on the other hand, obtain foodstuffs. The logical conclusion was that in this situation the only natural connection for Silesia was with Poland. At the same time, building their wealth, both these lands could only benefit from such a symbiosis, combining their potential in trade expansion to the east. "The Polish-Russian market must be identified as the most important for the Silesian industry. Its importance was always decisive for the economic situation of Silesia" (Kokot, 1961, p. 24).

The analysis of the first period in the history of Silesia – the Prussian and German rule until the end of the First World War – led the author of the theory of the dual unity to the conclusion that "The German economic thought and the practical everyday policy of Prussia and the Reich and the German economic factors produced, as a result of this attitude to Silesia, a kind of a colonial style, that

can be summarised in two items: 1) to leave the natural wealth of Silesia in a certain slumber as an iron colonial reserve, 2) to use the population potential of Silesia to foster the rapidly developing industry of the weakly populated lands of central and western Germany” (Kokot, 1948, pp. 110-113). Consequently, according to J. Kokot, Silesia became a victim of a tragic paradox of history, which consisted in the fact that the region contributed to the development of Prussia as a superpower, but as a result fell into economic ruin.

Silesia divided

The situation of Silesia and in Silesia after the First World War, or more precisely after the plebiscite and the third Silesian uprising, when Silesia was finally divided between Germany and Poland, was so different from the previous period that, according to the theory of J. Kokot, this must have resulted in a different distribution of emphases. Of course, the dual unity of Silesia still remained the key to conducting analyses and formulating conclusions. The difference was limited to the fact that, while in the previous period the starting point was criticism of the state in which the naturally homogeneous Silesia together with the Oder Region was artificially connected first with Prussia and then with Germany, in the case of the inter-war period, criticism was directed at the artificial political division of Silesia, which made it impossible for Silesia as a whole to maintain natural ties with Poland. Thus, in this fragment of the theory of the dual unity concerning the period of the post-plebiscite division of Silesia, Professor Kokot focused on three interwoven and difficult to separate threads:

- national and political oppression and economic discrimination in the areas of Silesia allocated to Germany;
- the economic position of the territories annexed to Poland and their socio-political integration with the rest of the country;
- lost opportunities and barriers to development as a result of the breakdown of Silesia’s natural regional unity.

These issues, especially the second one, were already dealt with in J. Kokot’s first book entitled *Zakres działania województwa śląskiego jako jednostki samorządu terytorialnego* (The scope of the Silesian Province’s activity as a territorial government unit) published in 1939. It was the result of research conducted at a Silesian Studies Seminar at the Jagiellonian University under the guidance of Professor Stefan Langrod. In the year of its publication the author was only twenty-three years old, but already in this first work – despite the fact that

it was first and foremost an insightful study in administrative law – he expressed his empathetic attitude to his little homeland and its links with Poland. In his first publication, he reveals a political approach to regional studies. In particular, he deals with the legal and public status of the Silesian Province, its “self-governance” rights, and discusses the individual competences of the Silesian self-government. He does this for a very specific purpose. He wants to substantiate the thesis firmly presented at the beginning of the study: “The Silesian Province is the same constituent part of the Republic of Poland as any other province, the sovereignty of the Republic of Poland over the Silesian Province is not in the least restricted” (Kokot, 1939, p. 14). Nevertheless, due to its special economic importance and social specificity, the Silesian Province deserves the exceptional status of a self-governing province.

In the theory of the dual unity, the issue of self-governing separateness, or even of Silesian autonomy, does not arise. This was not because of fear of any form of repression on the part of the authorities of the People’s Republic of Poland, but because of the author’s own belief. In a situation where the Oder-Neisse border, and consequently the fact that the so-called Recovered Territories belonged to Poland, were disputed by Germany, it would have been politically irresponsible, in the opinion of this patriotic scholar, to demand some form of autonomy for the region. It is worth mentioning that even today, when Poland’s western border is finally recognised, the idea of Silesian autonomy is controversial for the general public and opposed by the authorities.

The division of Silesia based on the Treaty of Versailles, which continued into the inter-war period was, in Kokot’s theory, just as irrational as the former affiliation of the whole of Silesia to Germany. He regarded this new situation as doubly unfavorable for the region. Germany continued its colonial policy in the part of the Silesian lands that remained under its rule. They did not show any initiative to create a coherent development strategy for the region. Instead, they kept pushing Silesia out of the internal German market, structurally distorting its economy in the area of manufacturing and degrading its peasantry, not to mention their neglect to make up for the colossal war losses. On the other hand, Poland, which had genuinely benefited from the industrially valuable incorporation of parts of Upper Silesia, could not make full use of this attribute, as the economically homogeneous region was divided between two different states.

Criticizing the decision concerning the division of Silesia, J. Kokot pointed out that the superpowers had treated the region as an abstract place on the map, a conventional creation that could be divided freely, based on purely political considerations. Meanwhile, they should have perceived Silesia as an

integral whole, a geographic, transport, economic well as a socio-national whole. Therefore, he wrote, geographical, economic, and planning unity could not be fully achieved until 1945: "There was no such unity before the First World War, when in the heart of the industrial district of Upper Silesia, in the central coal basin, the borders of the three partition empires – Germany, Russia, and Austria – met near Mysłowice (...), shattering the unity of the mining and metallurgical basin and artificially separating from it the adjacent districts of the so-called Galicia as well as the southern part of Upper Silesia (Cieszyn-Bielsko). This unity was not restored by the rebirth of the Polish state after the First World War, as the former triangle of the three empires and all its consequences had been eliminated under the "Versailles order", but a new, equally nonsensical border had been created, cutting into the most closely interlinked economic organism of the Upper Silesian industrial region, whose eastern and more substantial part fell to Poland in 1922, while the western (...) part remained in Germany. The resulting disintegration of the production potential (...), disorganization, the creation of artificial antagonisms between the two parts of the industrial district, and the burdening of the eastern, Polish part with the hostile attitude of German capital towards Poland – these elements sharply showed the consequences of violation of the fundamental law of economic development in Silesia, i.e. its unity as a region" (Kokot, 1966, pp. 17-19).

The direct consequences of the situation described by J. Kokot included mass unemployment, stagnation of productive forces, inhibition of technological progress, and the outflow of the labor force to other countries. He also mentioned specific sectors that suffered as a result of this state of affairs, incidentally, on both sides of the border. He provided the example of the mining industry, which was the main source of Silesia's wealth and potentially always a factor in the region's prosperity, but which had encountered barriers to development. Difficulties in selling coal as a result of customs borders, transport restrictions, and a deliberate discriminatory policy on the part of Germany meant that the production capacity of the mines was not properly utilized throughout this period. In light of the extensive data cited by Kokot, the economic irrationality of the division of Silesia was evidenced by the impediment to the development of the zinc industry. Zinc ores had to be exported with all the customs consequences this entailed, as the processing plants were located on the other side of the politically defined border. This artificial division perpetuated the monocultural character of the Silesian economy. Its structure was based mainly on the extraction of raw materials. As a result, it was exposed to economic and price fluctuations, unemployment, and supply shortages, and most importantly, it stayed on the sidelines of the processes of the development of the modern division of labor and the implementation of new technologies.

This detailed argumentation against the division of Silesia established by the Treaty of Versailles concerning the Silesian economy was accompanied in Kokot's theory by international-political arguments. In his opinion, as a result of the Versailles division of Silesia, the "Silesian problem" appeared as a factor of political instability in the central-eastern part of Europe, and not only during the interwar Nazi period in Germany but also earlier, during the time of the Weimar Republic. This division generated a whole series of conflicts of interest that complicated the international political situation. The crowning proof of this was the fact that the "Silesian problem" came to an end regionally, but above all Europe-wide, when a new European order was established, with the reunification of almost all Silesian territories within Poland's borders after the Second World War.

The original cause of the fragility of the Versailles order, including the "Silesian problem", was the irrational concern of the signatories for economic privileges for Germany and special care for the German national minority. On the other hand, there was no understanding of "(...) the interests of a nation that were only just returning to independent existence after more than a century of bondage, to – apart from its inherent right to freedom – help accomplish the European task of containing and eliminating the spirit of Prussianism, militarism, possessiveness, and the cult of the supremacy of power over law from the lives of the nations of the old continent" (Kokot, 1961, p. 67). This policy was consistently continued in the following decade. The Silesian question was used as an instrument of German pressure on Poland and the international community. It not only found its expression in bilateral relations but also enabled Germany to bring it permanently to the international arena as a problem, which was to create a climate of temporariness around Poland. The myth of the impossibility of paying war reparations due to limited financial possibilities resulting from, among other things, the crisis brought about by the allocation of a part of Upper Silesia to Poland, was constantly sustained in the official propaganda of the Weimar Republic. Meanwhile, there was no cooperation to use the Silesian potential, and there was never any will on the part of the Germans to cooperate. In the interwar period, the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany acted contrary to common-sense economic calculations. With time, their customs policy paralyzed the mutual exchange of goods to a considerable extent. Silesia suffered from this, of course – both its Polish and German parts. According to J. Kokot, such behavior of Germany proved once again that Silesia was not what they really wanted, or at least not primarily. The fundamental problem of the German *raison d'état* was the existence of an independent Polish state. Its official recognition did not put an end to the issue of territorial claims, which were part of the "German injustice" suffered in Versailles. From the very beginning, the foreign and economic policy of post-war Germany was geared towards weakening

and, in consequence, eradicating the young Polish independence. The economic moves against Upper Silesia, including the Polish-German tariff war which had already begun in 1925, were the real intention of German policy.

If the border established by the Treaty of Versailles had caused so many economic problems (and this was not disputed by the German side), then – as Kokot argued – extremely dynamic cooperation should have been in the economic interest of both countries to make proper use of the potential offered by the possession, by both Poland and Germany, of two parts of the “Silesian treasure”. All the more reason why this should be so. Meanwhile, there was no cooperation to use the Silesian potential, and there was never any will on the part of the Germans to cooperate. In the interwar period, the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany acted contrary to common-sense economic calculation. With time, their customs policy paralyzed the mutual exchange of goods to a considerable extent. Silesia suffered from this, of course – both its Polish and German parts. Such German behavior, according to Kokot, proved once again that Silesia was not what they wanted, or at least not primarily. “Presenting the Versailles border treaty as the cause rather than the function of the difficulties of the ‘German East’ within the German economy, the Germans ‘solved’ the problem in 1939 by invading and eradicating Poland. From the perspective of the economy of Silesia, which was at the same time united during the occupation, this meant economic incorporation into Poland” (Kokot, 1966, p. 30).

Economic and political issues were undoubtedly predominant in the theory of dual unity, but its author also considered the nationality issue to be extremely important. “The act of the Polish-oriented native population of the Silesian land” was presented by J. Kokot in many studies. According to him, the lack of regional unity of Silesia in the interwar period generated nationality-related problems. About 1.5 million Poles remained on the German side of the border and suffered persecution from the German state during Nazi times. The apogee of this persecution was the years of the Second World War. This was also the time of the most heroic manifestations of Polishness by Silesians as if to spite everyone – the Germans and, in a certain sense, the Poles. Kokot, as a Polish patriot, wrote about it with certain resentment: “To everyone’s spite, the Polishness in Silesia survived the German occupation victoriously, to the bewilderment of the Germans and the almost reluctant rather than joyful surprise of the Poles from other Polish lands (Kokot, 1973, p. 80). This survival and victory were possible, according to the author, for three reasons. Firstly, the Germanisation policy failed because of its brutality. It resulted only in small national losses, which were more than compensated for by a relatively accelerated spontaneous and thus most valuable

re-Polonisation. Secondly, the sense of organic connection between Silesia and the rest of Poland, and the resulting yearning for the Polish state, were intensified to an extent that had not been present even in the fervent times of the Silesian uprisings and the plebiscite, and which Poland had not deserved in its seventeen-year presence in Silesia. Thirdly, the political opportunism and materialism of which Silesia was accused proved to be a prejudiced myth, which must give way to the numerous proofs of patriotic feelings of the Silesian people and their instinctive political reasoning, manifested in the struggle against the occupant.

United Silesia within the borders of Poland

J. Kokot's Silesian regional studies can be formally (methodologically) regarded as "ordinary" academic work. However, it is impossible not to notice some extra-academic aim at their source: they are the result of the professor's undisguised sense of mission. The theory of the dual unity of Silesia had to have its complement: after more than a hundred years of suppressed possibilities of the region under the colonial rule of Prussia and then Germany, after more than twenty years of a destructive division between Poland and Germany, the goal of uniting Silesia within Polish borders was accomplished. However, the sense of mission did not cease; justification was required that all blockades to the region's flourishing had ended and that due to the dual unity, historically the best time for the region was just beginning. Therefore, in J. Kokot's theory, studies of the regional reality after the annexation of Silesia to Poland in 1945 played an important role. An additional motivation was the state of relations with West Germany. In a situation where the West German state was questioning the border with Poland, and territorial and property claims were made by part of the elite and the German public, the substantiation and confirmation of Silesia's belonging to Poland remained relevant. J. Kokot could not consider his mission as completed for one more reason. It concerned the regional, socio-economic and cultural identity of Silesia and its full integration with the other Polish lands. Thus, it was still necessary to "fight" for Silesia, but also to have a prospective vision of its propitiousness.

Professor Kokot analyzed numerous issues concerning the period after 1945 which focused on three ordering themes: economic and social matters, the project of the so-called Oder River Region, and the nationality issue.

According to the Potsdam decisions, the whole Silesia and other "indigenously Polish territories" were annexed to Poland, and very quickly, after just ten years, it turned out that these decisions speak for themselves – claimed J. Kokot. Based on analyses, he concluded that reality confirmed his theory. First of

all, the industry was reconstructed and expanded, and very quickly the pre-war levels of both employment and production were exceeded – mainly due to natural resources and semi-finished products (Kokot, 1955, p. 3 and other pages). In addition, a commonality of interests was created between Silesia and the other Recovered Territories on the one hand and these lands and the rest of Poland on the other hand. The commonality of interests of the various parts of the Recovered Territories, including Silesia, became all the more obvious to him (Kokot, 1966, p. 116). At the same time, there was a change in the organic and functional role of Silesia in the Polish economy – he wrote – from a direct producer Silesia was transformed into a stimulator, conductor, organizer, and catalyst releasing the economic activity of the whole country.

According to J. Kokot, the mining of coal, the greatest resource determining the potential of Silesia, was an example proving the importance of the region for the rest of the country. To illustrate his point, he presented data on coal consumption for the entire export production in all commodity groups, both in terms of quantity and value. He concluded that even in the economically bad year of 1957, united Silesia was able to export third more goods to European countries than divided Silesia in 1938. He calculated that united Silesia, with unrestricted access to the markets of other Polish lands, was able to increase its production by an average of 70%, and in some sectors even 100% more than it would have been possible in the case of the divided region. This state (and process) is particularly illustrated by the value of indirect exports in the 1950s, which rose from 21% to as much as 44%. According to Kokot's estimates, in 1957 the share of the three Silesian provinces in generating national products could be as high as 35%. They all occupied the leading positions in the country in terms of labor productivity, and together, as Silesia, they were far ahead of the remaining provinces. In agriculture, too, the particular parts of Silesia were among the country's leaders.

Silesia and Poland benefited from the dual unity not only in the field of the raw materials industry but also in areas regarded as modern at the time. J. Kokot pointed out that the economic policy towards Silesia as a whole immediately after 1945 had focused on three basic directions: the increase of the existing mining and metallurgical production, the reconstruction of plants, and the expansion of the product range. Over time, however, new and modern branches of production also began to emerge. This resulted in the dynamic development of the mining machinery industry, the electrical engineering industry, the mechanical industry, and the chemical industry. This catalog should also comprise the cement, petrochemical, iron, and non-ferrous metals industries, power generation, and textile manufacture. The scale of achievements, according to Kokot, can be illustrated

by the fact that already in 1950 the level of pre-war industrial production was exceeded, and since that year the global industrial production had increased more than 2.5 times. According to his estimates, about 70% of the fixed assets involved in the industry of the Katowickie Province (until the first half of the 1960s) resulted from investments made after 1945. "The Upper Silesian industry stimulates the development of the national industry", he wrote, "it determines the volume of Poland's international trade through its direct exports, as well as indirectly through supplying and cooperating with plants in other parts of the country, delivering industrial coal and transmitting electricity". In 1962 the industry of the Katowickie Province accounted for almost 23% of the total output of the Polish industry, including 3/4 of fuel production, 2/3 of iron production, nearly half of the mining and non-ferrous metals production, over 1/4 of the production of machinery and metal structures, nearly 1/4 of the production of the metal industry, about 1/5 of the production of electricity, heat and building materials, and 1/7 of the output of the electrical engineering industry. Thus, Silesia, he concluded, essentially contributed to the modernization and reconstruction of technology and to the rebuilding of the war-affected country which, as a result of its political bondage, had been underdeveloped for decades.

During the period of Silesia being united within the Polish borders, social and demographic issues also played an important role in substantiating the theory of dual unity. In his brochure *Przemiany społeczne na Śląsku Opolskim po II wojnie światowej* (Social transformations in Opole Silesia after World War II; 1975a) and his journalistic texts of the same year (1975b, 1975c), he presented a number of indicators showing how the Opole region had benefited from integration with Poland. He drew attention to the dynamics of the urbanization process that had taken place in the region and had fundamentally changed its social structure in the post-war period. While the percentage of rural inhabitants was as high as 72.7% in 1950, it fell to 53.3% a quarter of a century later. At the same time, the countryside was modernized, and within 25 years of the establishment of the Opolskie Province, the percentage of people living off agriculture decreased by half. Professor Kokot stressed the importance of the rate of investment growth, which he considered historically unprecedented in the region. Thanks to those investments, thousands of new jobs were created, and subsequently – albeit with some delay – residential building construction developed, which additionally improved the economic situation. He calculated that between 1950 and 1973 investment expenditures in the state-owned economy amounted to over 91.5 billion zlotys, and individual investments, e.g. in 1973 alone, amounted to a further 920 million zlotys.

Kokot regarded the steady increase in the level of education and qualifications of the Opole region's population as historically significant and socially desirable. He stressed that in the case of men the number of employees with secondary and higher education had increased threefold between 1958 and 1973, while in the case of women it had even increased fourfold. He supported the data with an extensive statistical synthesis illustrating social changes in the Opole region after the Second World War until 1973. It clearly showed the considerable civilizational advancement of the Silesian population, which, according to him, was achieved precisely because of the unity with Poland. J. Kokot was not entirely satisfied with it, though: "Despite such significant progress, however, we cannot be satisfied with it – these are not yet the percentages of higher qualifications that would guarantee the success of the scientific and technological revolution in our region. By 1990, we must have 10 percent of the total workforce with higher education of the most diverse types" (Kokot, 1975a, p. 9). An important conclusion for the missionary function of his theory, which Kokot stressed in his publications, was that individual successes were not possible in previous periods, but became facts after united Silesia was incorporated into Poland.

The Oder River Region concept went beyond the borders of the Silesian region and the borders of Poland. It was an international project with an economic and political dimension. In the last period of the Professor's life, it became his great unaccomplished idea, to which he devotedly tried to convince academic circles, public opinion, and especially the authorities at various levels. He explained the concept comprehensively in an interview for the "Opole" monthly magazine: "I think this issue developed in me and grew organically (...). At first, I dealt with the economic situation of Silesia in the period of division and the period of unification. And along with this issue, the problem of transport appeared. Silesia as an industrial region, just like the Czechoslovak Upper Industrial Region, has the misfortune of being an intra-continental territory, which has no direct connection with the sea, and therefore the Upper Silesian industry struggled for a canal. Under German rule, it could not proceed as long as tariff considerations played a role, because the Reich authorities favored the districts of western or central Germany and not this 'Nebenland' in the Oder River basin. So whoever controls the upper river course, with the highest concentration of industry in Upper and Lower Silesia, must have control of the lower course of the Oder, including the main port or a complex of ports at the mouth of the river. This is the canal (the Danube-Oder canal, note L.R.), shortening the route from the Baltic Sea to the eastern Mediterranean by 2500 km. Or to the Black Sea. (...) In my academic activity, I was first concerned with the unity of Silesia within the Polish borders, and thus with Poland's return to the Western Territories, and simultaneously, with the need to take advantage of the

great development opportunity ensuing from the fact that almost the entire Oder is within Poland's borders, and that this river can be linked to the Danube through Czechoslovakia" (Kracherowa, 1976, p. 5).

Józef Kokot regretted that the project was not implemented. He believed it was one of the genuine economic failures of not only Silesia but all the regions along the Oder River. After all, this was where he saw a possibility for improving the economic situation of these lands. He even called the neglect of inland navigation in various possible aspects of this field of communication (waterway, shipping, shipyards, river ports, manning) a "scandal on the Oder River". He believed that the Oder while fulfilling the geographical and economic conditions to become an internal industrial and commercial waterway for the Silesian region (and consequently for the entire Oder River Region) just like the Ruhr Valley or London, was not being used. In the last period of Kokot's life, the development of the Oder became the most important, albeit unfulfilled, objective of his mission for Silesia and Poland. With his usual energy, he tried to convince decision-makers to accept his concept and gave it an institutional shape. On his initiative, the Oder Commission was established at the Society for the Development of the Western Territories, and after the Society's dissolution, it was transferred to the Silesian Institute (Buchala, Gilas, Lis, ..., pp. 55-56). He also collaborated with teams of scholars and experts to develop the socio-economic and international aspects of this concept.

In the post-war period, the national issue in Silesia took on a completely different dimension. It was analyzed in J. Kokot's regional studies as well as in the theory of the dual unity of Silesia. He referred to three new problems emerging after the reunification of the region with Poland: the displacement of Germans from the so-called Recovered Territories (including Silesia), re-Polonisation of Silesia, and the related issue of integration of the native population with immigrants. All these problems in the post-war history of Silesia were important for the fulfillment of the dual unity. J. Kokot had no doubts about the relocation of the Germans. He supported the idea from the very beginning, deeply convinced that it was historically just and politically correct.

The consequence of the organic reception of Silesia must be the recognition of the principle that every Silesian is a Pole – such a statement in various versions was repeated by J. Kokot in all publications, speeches, and expert opinions on the issue of nationality in Silesia. He realized, however, that political acts alone, such as the incorporation of Silesia into Poland, would not change anything overnight. He thought that the most important thing was to make all Silesians convinced of their Polish identity, and all Poles – convinced of the Polish

identity of Silesians. This is why he attached so much significance to the re-Polonisation campaign, and within it, to the so-called “purely human factor”. “The starting point,” he wrote, “should therefore be to emphasize what is common for Silesians and the immigrant population, mutual tolerance, respect, goodwill, willingness to get to know each other, a situation where neither side discriminates against the other.” “And one more condition required to conduct our work: let us simply try, humanly speaking, to be good, honest and loyal to each other, to all the people around us, without applying the law of a regional or any other kind of clique. Then we will become attractive to each other. At that moment the task of merging into unity will fall off the agenda of our work: it will already be unity” (Kokot, 1973, p. 85 and other pages).

However, these somewhat idealistic assumptions of the re-Polonisation campaign were not fully implemented, nor did they always bring the results expected by Professor Kokot. After 1956, the notion of a German minority in Poland began to function in public discourse. Professor Kokot reacted to it absolutely negatively. He believed that this concept illustrated a fundamentally false situation, exacerbated by its use by officials. He argued that it was not some previously hidden Germans who suddenly appeared in Silesia, but that Silesians for various reasons were abandoning Polishness. So it was not a problem of the German minority, which evoked so many negative historical associations in Poland, but a problem of the retreat from Polishness. And it was this problem that the authorities needed to address, in terms of both causes and effects. The source of this problem was the wrong initial assumption of the verification campaign in the immediate post-war years. In Professor Kokot’s opinion, the mistake consisted in the fact that all inhabitants of the annexed Silesia, as citizens of the former German Reich, were treated, although probably unintentionally, as Germans. The verification consisted in providing evidence to the contrary, while the burden of proving Polishness was put on the verified persons rather than the verifiers, and these were often German communists (Kokot, 1971, pp. 168-171). Such a solution not only undermined the Polish argument about the original Polish character of these lands and the Polish population living there but also contributed to the consolidation of destructive stereotypes. The Silesians had the stereotype of the Pole-newcomer usurping the right to decide about the identity and fate of the ancient inhabitants of these lands, and the Poles had the stereotype of the Silesians secretly sympathizing with the Germans. According to Kokot, this original sin of the verification process did the most damage in the Opole region: “Such an attitude to the matter – though another one was probably impossible at the time – stimulated the disorientation of the immigrant population (who, as a rule, saw ‘Germans’ here) and undermined the political resilience of the native Polish population, forced to undergo the onerous

procedure of proving that they were Polish, which particularly depressed the most nationally conscious element, which had already carried out this proof long before in confrontation with the Germans, and thus without the suspicion that it was done for opportunistic purposes” (Kokot, 1975a, p. 6).

These undesirable effects of the verification and the post-war situation, in general, contributed to the phenomenon which Professor Kokot called “the Silesian complex”. The essence of this complex was at first mistrust, which was simply deepened later as a result of mistakes and omissions on both sides, rather than national divisions. The Silesians, especially the few local elites, with fresh memories of humiliation or injustice in the immediate post-war period, continued to feel isolated when positions in the broadly defined public service and economy in their area were filled by immigrant elites. In turn, these elites, failing to understand the local specifics or guided by an unjustified sense of superiority, committed many political indiscretions.

There was something else in the “Silesian complex” that explained the change of nationality among many Silesians to a German one, but which he could not write about or refer to directly at the time. That is why he used an analogy with the situation that had taken place in Upper Silesia after 1921: “(...) the population newly united with the nation, not having been introduced to the system of party struggles and the underlying programs, reasoning in terms of a simplified identification of the government with the state and the nation. Before they had learned how to become a Polish opposition, they manifested their dissatisfaction by voting for German lists” (Materiały, T. 13, K.23). Professor Kokot claimed that the situation was similar in the Opole region. The majority of the population living there was not politically literate and did not understand certain internal and geopolitical conditions that determined the social and political shape of Poland. By not accepting that authority in principle, or only some of its past or present actions, in many cases, they did not accept the state and transferred their dislike to Polishness as well.

The past, present, and future of Silesia, both economic and social, including the problems of the German national minority, displacement, and verification, were closely connected by J. Kokot with the legal form and political content of Polish-German relations. He regarded these as conditions for peace in post-war Europe. Thus, in his theory and political thought, the Silesian-centric viewpoint was transferred to the plane of international relations. The internationalization of the Silesian question was not only an expression of J. Kokot’s convictions and the result of his scientific research, but also a deliberate political strategy that he recommended to convince the European public opinion and governments that this question was not merely a part of bilateral German-Polish relations, but a

functional element of the international order. He consistently presented this kind of political thinking in all his publications. He presented its essence in his final work: "One of the most destructive factors burdening the relations of many countries with the German Reich, i.e. the German national minorities, disappeared from the map of Europe. Wartime repatriations and Nazi evacuations, as well as post-war relocations, had in principle cleared the territories of central, eastern, and southern European countries of German populations which, if they had remained there, would have burdened the relations of the countries concerned with both German states by their very existence, and in territories that until recently had been the object of territorial revisionism, would have been an element of liability, unrest, and threat to the post-war stability that Europe needed for its reconstruction and development under conditions of social order and political peace. The full integration of this population in the GDR, the FRG, and West Berlin best reflects the compatibility of the Potsdam decisions with the demographic and economic reality of Germany after World War II" (Kokot, 1974, p. 36).

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the cognitive value of the theory of the dual unity of Silesia is that, on the one hand, it is part of the history of Silesian studies, in this sense also regional studies, and on the other hand, part of the history of political ideas, which makes it also part of political science. This is sufficient to tentatively confirm the hypothesis that regional research is an area of interest for political scientists and that regional studies can be treated as a subdiscipline of political science. However, this hypothesis, especially its second part, requires further justification in the form of criteria and specific conditions that should be met.

The first of these criteria is a situation in which a region as a whole is an object of study. At this stage, it is only an object which, from the perspective of disciplines other than political science, can be treated as a non-political object, but, for example, a spatial (geography), social (sociology), or economic (economics) object, and then it becomes an object of research appropriate for these disciplines. However, a region as a whole in all its (cultural, social, or economic) aspects, undergoing politicization in specific conditions, may enter the state of the political. This often happens as a result of internal phenomena or processes within a region, or as a result of the inclusion or integration of a region as a whole into the political reality of a state, group of states, or an international system. The analyzed case of the theory of the dual unity of Silesia fully meets this criterion and its conditions. It thus confirms the hypothesis that regional studies can be seen as a subdiscipline of political science.

Unlike the first objective criterion, the second one is rather subjective. In the first criterion, a region as a whole acquires the political as a result of objective phenomena or processes and thus secondarily becomes an object of research in political science. In the second criterion, a region is politicized from outside by science in the service of politics, or subjectively by the researcher as a result of their subjective ideological and political convictions. In the second criterion, a region as a whole becomes an object of interest for specific political scientists or national political science, for example, within the pursuit of the *raison d'état*. The theory of the dual unity of Silesia meets both criteria. As a region, Silesia was and now is objectively an independent political object, and the author of the theory, Józef Kokot, was a committed Silesian-Polish patriot, and also the first professor in Poland in the discipline of political science, still in the period of their infancy. To a large extent, therefore, this discipline built its identity on Silesian studies.

The third criterion can be called subdisciplinary, which means the presence of a region in political science research not as a whole, but fragmentarily. Selected political objects or aspects of a region are a subject of research within a specialization in political science. In such approaches, regional studies cannot be treated as a subdiscipline of political science because research, in this case, does not lead to a generalization about a region and regionalism (a theory, definition, etc.). Such research is only of interest to political scientists within other subdisciplines, such as political systems, parties, social movements, and electoral behavior.

Based on the theory of the dual unity of Silesia, the above analysis needs to be further developed. However, it may also constitute a voice in the discussion on the methodological status of regional studies and the scope of political science as a scientific discipline.

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